

## *Guidelines to prevention fires in upholstered furniture.*

In just four minutes a sofa fire can engulf an entire living room in flames, filling the home with thick, dark smoke and toxic gasses. Temperatures can exceed 1,400 degrees F in this short period of time, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

### **1 Be Aware, Upholstered furniture is flammable:**

- The foam used in cushions is shipped to furniture manufacturer's with a warning that includes language like this: Flammable! If ignited, polyurethane foam can burn rapidly, releasing great heat and consuming oxygen. The resulting deficiency of oxygen will present **Danger of Suffocation and Death** to the occupants.
- Furniture manufacturers have refused to warn consumers about the dangers of their products. They also have refused to voluntarily take simple measures to make their products less flammable. Only a handful of furniture retailers sell products that meet the California standards nationwide

### **2 Be fire safe around upholstered furniture:**

- A lit cigarette can smolder for 20-30 minutes before igniting anything. Check furniture where smokers have been sitting for unintentionally dropped smoking materials.
- Never smoke reclining in upholstered furniture or in bed.
- Provide large, deep ashtrays for smokers and place ashtrays on study surfaces. Do not place ashtrays on the arms of furniture, where they can be knocked over.
- The combination of smoking and drinking alcohol can be fatal. Keep an eye on intoxicated smokers.
- Keep lighters and matches out of sight and reach of children, preferably in a locked cabinet. Teach children that when they find a lighter or matches, they should give them to an adult. Use child-resistant lighters.
- Be sure space heaters are at least three feet away from upholstered furniture, drapes and anything that can burn.
- Do not allow furniture to come in contact with halogen lamps or any electrical appliance.

### **3 Where to buy furniture that meets higher flammability standards:**

- In California, furniture is required to comply with flammability safety standard Technical Bulletin 117. The following national retailers have stated to the National Association of State Fire Marshals that they sell only upholstered furniture compliant with the California Bureau of Home Furnishings Technical Bulletin 117 safety standards:

HomeLife Furniture  
Norwalk Furniture  
Spiegel

IKEA  
Macys West  
Harden Furniture

JC Penney  
Rowe  
La-Z-Boy Residential

**Reference:** National Association of State Fire Marshals, [http://www.firemarshals.org/issues/home/upholstery\\_fires.html](http://www.firemarshals.org/issues/home/upholstery_fires.html)